



Kentucky Department of Agriculture

A Consumer
Protection And
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MARKETING MATTERS

Office of Agriculture Marketing and Product Promotion
100 Fair Oaks Lane, 5th Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601 Phone 502-564-4983
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Treasures in Timber

By Bill Holleran

Joe Ball retired from the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service nearly 20 years ago and has been logging ever since. He purchased 1,400 acres in Wayne County in 1965 and 1,600 acres on the Kentucky-Tennessee border in 1992. He has proved that logging and conservation can work together through sound management.

Ball maintains his property for timber production while remaining environmentally conscious and being a good steward of the land. Ball harvests mature trees and leaves younger trees to replenish his forests in a sustainable production system. Ball's approach to timber management starts with making roads through his property, which includes building culverts and water bars to prevent erosion. Once these are in place he can selectively harvest timber, using timber stand improvement (TSI) practices. By maintaining roads he's able to enjoy more of his property, reduce erosion, and improve timber stands by removing less desirable species like *Ailanthus*, an invasive species that competes with valuable hardwoods for space and nutrients.

"My idea about timber land management makes it easier to manage, easier to log, and easier on the environment. New species are generated when the woods are opened up, which also increases beneficial habitat for wildlife. I contend we've stimulated a lot of growth and renewal here. I try to be environmentally sensitive, look at the big picture, and look long-term," said Ball.



Joe Ball in one of many scenic places on his property.

Deer, turkeys, small animals and even bear have been seen on Ball's property.

Currently, only one in 10 woodland owners do any timber management, a figure that Ball hopes will increase through the educational efforts of groups like the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, of which Ball is president.

"Woodland owners should get interested in their commodity and seek out incentives. Kentucky has a lot riding on it. It's not just economics; it's also about clean air, water quality, and aesthetics," Ball said.

Ball is hoping organizations like KWOA can encourage new model programs through the Agriculture Development Board for woodland owners

that encourage sound timber management and forest stewardship. "There ought to be cost-share programs available to help develop log roads if nothing more than to create fire lanes in woodlands," Ball said. KWOA is also working with the state entomologist to address invasive insects like the emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, and pine beetle that threaten woodlands.

Ball is also interested in helping Kentucky develop a modern marketing system for logs that are graded and scaled on USDA standards and reported in a public forum like other agricultural commodities. "We are encouraging the University of Kentucky to help formulate an economic model for loggers that takes into consideration the many variables associated with this industry and helps address profit potential for interested producers."

Ball believes there are markets for a variety of wood products in Kentucky. "It's very worthwhile to shop around and sell your logs to somebody who wants them. **Find a buyer for your species and size of trees because different mills specialize in different products, including pallet logs, lumber/saw logs, pulpwood, and specialty mills.** There's a big market for cross-ties used in the railroad industry," said Ball. Ball sorts his timber before taking it to buyers at various mills in southern Kentucky.

For more information about the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association visit their Web site, www.kentuckywoodlandownersassociation.com.

KDA Holding Cooking Demonstrations at Six Farmers' Markets

Would you buy meat and fish at a farmers' market rather than a grocery freezer? Your Kentucky Department of Agriculture wants to know. It intends to find out using a \$50,200 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, part of the Federal State Market Improvement Program, to gauge market potential for meat and aquaculture items in farmers' markets.

"We did this because a lot of producers have called the KDA and wanted to take their product to retail customers," said Janet Eaton, the KDA's farmers' market coordinator. "There are 98 farmers' markets in the state, so the logical thing is to take it to farmers' markets."

For six weeks in August and September, a professional chef will conduct cooking demonstrations at six farmers' markets across the state. Chef Nancy Russman will prepare beef, pork, catfish and prawn (freshwater shrimp) as well as specialty meats like pastured poultry and goat. Russman is a creator of famous recipes and former manager of the Kids

Café program for the Dare to Care Food Bank in Louisville.

Local restaurant owners/managers will be mailed invitations to the demonstration in their area. The first event was held Saturday, Aug. 6 in Corbin; the others are Saturday, Aug. 13 in Owensboro; Saturday, Aug. 20 in Ashland; Saturday, Aug. 27, in Louisville; Thursday, Sept. 1, in Erlanger, and Saturday, Sept. 17, in Paducah.

"We hope restaurateurs will see not only the demonstrations but the variety of food available for them at farmers' markets," Eaton said. "All the recipes will have seasonal produce in them – we want to promote the whole thing."

"These are new markets," she added, noting meat and fish currently are not sold at any of the six markets, as they are at larger farmers' markets in Lexington and Frankfort. "We're trying to get them open to selling this kind of product."

Eaton said the potential profitability is the biggest question prospective producers have about selling meat and seafood

at farmers' markets. "That's why we're doing the demonstrations," she said.

The KDA will conduct surveys to gather feedback from customers sampling Russman's recipes. "Then we're going to go back the next week without the event and see if those people are coming back and buying," Eaton said.

As part of the grant, each producer that agrees to sell meat or fish at farmers' markets will get a free trailer and freezer, which they get to keep by supplying the KDA with sales data.

"Participating producers will be giving us information we can give back to potential producers," Eaton said. "We're working with health departments to give producers step-by-step guidelines for the actual cost of operation and market potential to see if they want to do it. We'll be able to tell them what their profit might be and how they can move into this thing legally and safely."

Produce Auction Results available on 1-800-FARMLot

With Kentucky's growing horticultural industry and increasing number of produce auctions across the state, KDA has renovated its 1-800-Farmlot automated market reporting system to include produce auction prices. The markets include the Bath County Produce Auction in Owingsville, Buffalo Trace Produce Auction in Maysville, Fairview Produce Auction, and the Lincoln County auction in Crab Orchard. Sales results will be updated as market reports are received. To access market prices simply dial 1-800-327-6568 from any touch-tone phone and listen for options.

Many produce auctions offer the same quality fruits and vegetables found at the farmers' market, so take advantage of the opportunity to buy in bulk. If you're into home canning, produce auctions can be a great place to shop. Buying in bulk can help save you money over buying by the pound, and the products are often fresher than those found at the supermarket.

Organic Co-op Looking For Dairy Producers

Jim Wedeberg, dairy director, and Paul Dettloff, staff veterinarian of Organic Valley Co-op, held an organizational meeting to develop a pool of farmers to produce certified organic milk. The meeting was held in Christian County at the Fairview Produce Auction in late June. Jake Schmitz, organic program coordinator for KDA, was in attendance to help with technical and certification questions.

There were 30 farmers in attendance, all looking to transition into organic production. Seven are very close to meeting the National Organic Programs standards, possibly within the year. They want to transition because of the sustainable production practices of organic, the steady and increasing premium (currently \$20.50 per hundredweight) for the milk, and to be part of the largest growth market in all of agriculture, certified organic.

Dr. Dettloff gave a very informative

presentation on organic methods of herd health. Dettloff's methods were inexpensive compared to conventional methods, readily available, and effective enough to keep the 607 head of Organic Valley livestock healthy. He teaches to feed a grass diet, which keeps the animals healthy and feed costs down. He was impressed with the knowledge and enthusiasm of the farmers in attendance and felt they were ahead of the curve compared to many other regions of the U.S.

Schmitz feels this is the kind of opportunity that really helps farms of all sizes. The small farm with 30-50 cows can add value with the low input costs and the premium prices organic milk receives. "Organic is here to stay. It's growing beyond its lofty expectations," said Schmitz. For information about KDA's organic certification program contact Schmitz at (502) 564-4983.

Something to think about.... Seafood

By Angela Caporelli

Seafood, often thought of as only coming from the sea, has come a long way! In Kentucky there are several farmers that have become seafood growers. Farmers in Kentucky have diversified production to include fish and shrimp with some very positive returns. The fin fish that are being grown by local farmers include catfish, tilapia, bass (both hybrid and largemouth) and paddlefish for meat and caviar. The crustaceans are the succulent freshwater prawn available fresh throughout September and frozen throughout the year.

The word seafood in the marketing of food for humans encompasses all wild-caught and farm-raised fish and crustaceans, both fresh and salt water. There have been several articles lately with claims that question the health benefits and safety of seafood containing mercury. Often, these claims have not been validated scientifically or reviewed by the industry or academic experts. Often they are referring to animals from high on the food chain. A swordfish that eats fish that eats fish that eats fish would be a candidate of "bioaccumulation." If there were trace elements within each level of food source, starting with the smallest of fish, and eaten by bigger and bigger fish, there could be bioaccumulation, or build up of elements in top-of-the-food-chain fish. This is a very unlikely issue in lower food chain fish like those found in Kentucky. Farmers here have taken steps to

educate consumers and assure them that seafood grown and processed in Kentucky meets the highest standards of quality and safety. The catfish growers in western Kentucky have sent fish samples to a third-party lab to test for chemicals and toxins such as mercury. The test concluded that the levels of mercury in Kentucky-grown catfish and paddlefish were undetectable.

Also helping consumers make the best educated decision on purchasing food for their families is the new Country Of Origin Labeling (COOL). Most seafood available in retail outlets is mandated to follow COOL legislation. Right now seafood is the ONLY food industry mandated to follow the legislative regulations of COOL. This legislation mandates that seafood retailers list what country that seafood product was caught or processed in and whether it was farm-raised or wild-caught.

Fish farmers in the United States are regulated heavily by government agencies to ensure consumer safety. The main agencies overseeing seafood and seafood production are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Along with NMFS, the United States Department of Commerce (USDC) oversees inspection standards to ensure that no fish or seafood contains toxic substances from contaminants, feed, or processing, and all product statements are true.

Local and state departments of health oversee processing, transport and holding activities to ensure safe health, handling and processing protocols are followed. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees aquaculture, fish farming, and in-farm pond production to ensure feed quality and consistency.

In Kentucky we go one step further to help you identify a local product by using the Kentucky Proud logo. When you see this logo, you know that that seafood product was grown or processed in Kentucky by a Kentucky farmer. We want to grow our industry; we want Kentucky farmers to be proud of the healthy and safe products they are growing for you. And we want you to buy Kentucky seafood products for good health.

Landscape Industry News

Congratulations to the Kentucky Certified Nurseryman class of 2005. Michael T. Bobo, Stephanie Breitmeyer, Anthony D. Brouse, Chad Cagle, Ronnie Day, Jason Spiller, and Brian Smith successfully completed the KCN examination and have earned the designation Kentucky Certified Nurseryman.

The Kentucky Certified Nurseryman examination is administered once a year at the Kentucky Landscape Industries educational conference in January. Anyone may obtain the KCN training manual and take the exam. For an individual to be granted KCN status, he or she must have worked six months full-time or 500 hours part-time in a nursery, garden center or industry firm. For more information visit the Kentucky Nursery and Landscape Association Web site at www.knla.org.

Mark your calendar for the Southern Plant Conference Sept. 8-10 in Louisville. Leading growers and researchers will discuss new plant varieties and new applications for old cultivars and examine new methods from industry professionals and renowned horticulturists. For details visit www.knla.org.

New Buck Performance Test Planned

As Kentucky's goat industry develops, new tools are necessary to assist producers in efficiently producing market kids. A buck performance test is one option for producers to improve efficiency because it provides data that can be used for selection purposes.

In the absence of EPD information, Kentucky goat producers have had to rely primarily on visual appraisal and pedigree information when selecting a buck for their herds. A Buck Performance Test will allow producers to purchase bucks not only on these traits, but on how fast he grew, which provides some insight on how fast his kids are likely to grow. As a meat goat producer, your goal is to get 50- to 70-pound kids to market as quickly and efficiently as possible. Knowing you have a herd sire with the genetic potential to produce fast-growing kids is one step in reaching this goal.

In addition, this performance test could give Kentucky's breeding stock producers an additional tool to market their high-quality meat goats. Those with truly superior genetics should benefit from the ability to prove the

performance of their young bucks.

The 2005 Kentucky Buck Performance Test will be an 84-day performance trial scheduled to run from September 3 through November 26, 2005. The test will be conducted in a newly renovated facility at Western Kentucky University's research farm under the guidance of WKU, the Mammoth Cave Goat Association, and a steering committee consisting of representatives from Kentucky's regional universities, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Goat Producers Association, and goat producers from across the state.

Bucks registered by August 5, 2005, will be eligible. Registered and non-registered buck kids weighing between 40 and 100 pounds are eligible for the performance test and will arrive at the Western Kentucky University Research Farm on Saturday, August 20, 2005. Average daily gain will be measured every 28 days in addition to a one-time scrotal circumference and loin eye measurement. Bucks performing at or above average

for average daily gain during the test period will be offered to the public on Friday evening, December 2, 2005, at the L.D. Brown Agriculture Center in Bowling Green. The sale will be held in conjunction with the Kentucky Goat Producers Association 2005 annual meeting.

For more information contact Tess Caudill with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture at (502) 564-4983 or Tess.Caudill@ky.gov.

Acres of Land Winery is an Agri-Tourism Destination



In December 2004 Lowell Land of Acres of Land Winery began selling his first vintage of wines. Now, Land is just weeks away from opening his restaurant six miles west of Richmond off exit 87 on Barnes Mill Road.

The winery, restaurant and 6,000-square-foot community building are part of Land's complete agritourism package that includes a produce market, gift shop, weddings, company picnics, trade shows, reunions, and business meetings on his 615-acre farm. With help from his wife, Katherine, and daughter, Marla, heading up the entertainment, Land is destined to be a prominent fixture in Kentucky's emerging agritourism industry.

Land's property was purchased by his grandfather and handed down through generations. His father was a lifelong tobacco and cattle farmer, and before his

father's passing they talked about the possibility of a winery. "I wanted to try something different. After doing some research and discovering that Kentucky once had 2,000 acres of grapes, and finding out our climate was good for growing them, I put out an acre for trial and began thinking about building a winery. It didn't happen overnight," said Land. Land felt that the winery industry in Kentucky was still in its infancy since the commonwealth had just over 300 acres in production.

His winemaker, Ben O'Daniel, has helped him create wines that have won bronze and silver medals at the International Wine Competition at the Florida State Fair and gold, silver, and bronze medals at the Wine Tasters Guild in Michigan. With Italian-made winery equipment and a bottling line that can process 1,300 bottles an hour, Land hopes to process 11,000 gallons of wine this year. He thinks full production capacity could reach 25,000 gallons.

Land believes the restaurant will be the key to his success as a destination point. He's hired Chef Joe Milanich, who was the executive chef of the Campbell House in Lexington, to bring "classic southern cuisine" to patrons who visit. Chef Joe will have access to a large gar-

den behind the restaurant where he can pick fresh produce for his signature dishes. "I want people in the restaurant to see chef Milanich go out to the garden to get the food he will prepare for them," said Land, who wants quality to be the focus of their operation.

Land also plans to purchase Kentucky meats for his restaurant and plans to have a gift shop on site with various "Kentucky Proud" products produced in the Commonwealth.

With fine wines, Southern cuisine, and picturesque views just 30 minutes from Lexington, Acres of Land Winery should be on your list of places to visit. For more information about events available at the winery call (859) 328-3000 or visit its Web site at www.acresoflandwinery.com.

-Bill Holleran

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Richie Farmer, Commissioner

Bill Holleran, Newsletter Editor

100 Fair Oaks Lane, 5th Floor Frankfort, KY 40601

Phone: (502) 564-4983 Fax: (502) 564-0854

visit www.kyagr.com

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